

Company Number 05564649  
A Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered in England

**St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited**

**WEST AREA BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2008 at 3:30 PM**

**Present**

Ian Gardner, Lyn Ralph, Andrew Bosmans, Cllr Doreen Woodhouse, Cllr Sandra Holland, Cllr Elsie Butler, Cllr Beryl Roberts, Cllr Marilyn Green, Cllr Deborah Hutchinson.

**In Attendance**

Judith Jones (Director of Customer Services), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Rob Chapple (Business Maintenance Manager), Helen Kilshaw (Performance & Information Manager), Dave Wilkinson (Neighbourhood Housing Manager), Maxine Newton (Personal Assistant).

**Co-opted Members**

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**Members of the Public**

Mr Ken Baron

1. <b>Apologies and Quorum</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.1 The Director of Customer Services opened the meeting in the absence of the Chair and gave particular welcome to Councillor Deborah Hutchinson and Councillor Marilyn Green who had been newly appointed to the West Area Board on behalf of the Council.	
1.2 She advised members that Andrew Bosmans had recently been recruited to the Board. Andrew has also agreed to be the Board Representative (Independent) on the West Area Board.	
1.3 Councillor Doreen Woodhouse has also been nominated to the Board (this is subject to the Council rules of call in until 18.11.08) and has also agreed to become the Board Representative (Council) on the West Area Board.	
1.4 Rory Perrett, who had previously Chaired the West Area Board has also accepted a position on the Board and will therefore not be attending future meetings of the West Area Board.	

As the Vice Chair was not present at the meeting it was agreed the Director of Customer Services Chair the meeting.

- 1.5 It was reported that an email had been received from Vimbai Mbedzi who had unfortunately tendered her resignation due to her commitment with university studies. It was noted that the West Area Board wished her all the best in her new full time position and thanked her for her time she has spent on the Area Board.

**LMilan to produce and send a letter on behalf of the West Area Board to Vimbai Mbedzi.**

**LM**

- 1.6 Apologies were received from Betty Clayton, Vimbai Mbedzi, Godwin and Cllr Beryl Roberts.

- 1.7 It was noted that a quorum was present.

**2. Declarations of Interest by Area Board Members**

- 2.1 Ian Gardner & Lyn Ralph declared an interest in number 11 - Estate Improvement Fund.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting held on 8 September 2008**

- 3.1 The minutes of the West Area Board Meeting held on 8 September were approved as a correct record.

**4. Matters arising from previous minutes held on 8 September 2008**

- 4.1 **From item 4.8 – Abandoned Calls** – The Business Maintenance Manager advised that analysis had been made by contacting 14 customers who had abandoned call.

This had identified a number of domestic reasons for customers abandoning calls and also that some partially deaf callers had struggled to hear the announcement therefore hung up. This had been addressed and the result tested by consultation with customers.

**JJ to check that partially deaf customers are not experiencing the same issues as part of the CBL service.**

**JJ**

**Members requested an investigation into if sufficient amounts of time are initially allocated to some jobs. Agreed that this will be reported to the next Area Board Meeting.**

**RC**

- 4.2 **From item 6.4 – Glaziers West Area** – The Business

Maintenance Manager advised that complaints had been received from 2 jobs. On investigation orders were initially being raised with an appointment date 10 days in the future. This did not take into account the correct timescales for units being delivered therefore repairs were not being carried out on time. The process had now been revised in order to achieve target dates.

4.4 **From item 13.1 – Digital TV Signals** – to be discussed as a Joint Area Board agenda item.

4.5 **From item 6.5 – Doncaster Federation** – it was noted that a member of the Performance Team had presented the Customer Satisfaction Booklet to the Doncaster Federation which will be an agenda item for future meetings.

4.6 **From item 8.3 – Average Rent Arrears** – it was noted that there had been a slight rise in rent arrears over the period.

## 5. **Appointment of Chair & Vice Chair**

5.1 The Company Secretary advised members that as Rory Perrett had now been recruited to the Main Board the Area Board needed to consider a replacement Chair. It was suggested that Vice Chair, Betty Clayton take on the role until the time of the Board governance review. Members considered this option and agreed subject to Betty Clayton accepting the position.

**Company Secretary to contact Betty Clayton.**

LM

**It was noted that the West Area Board wished to formally thank Rory Perrett for his valuable contributions to the Area Board and asked that a letter be sent to this effect.**

LM

## 6. **Housemark Performance Information Benchmarking**

6.1 The Performance & Information Manager introduced this report that presented benchmarking information to enable comparisons with SLHD's peers to be undertaken.

6.2 As a whole performance is improving, the 13 performance indicators are being reviewed, with the probability of more indicators being added so SLHD can bench mark against all of the services within the organisation.

6.3 Another member asked if the information could be provided on a 'ward' basis.

The Director of Customer Services advised that the information can be provided into the 5 Neighbourhood areas, however it

would be difficult to separate it into wards. It was noted that when the new IT system was being considered this request could be taken into account.

**6.4 Area Board members noted the contents of the report**

**7. Performance Information**

7.1 The Performance & Information Manager presented this report that advised members of key performance issues for September 2008.

7.2 Page 9 – Average Time to Re-let Empty Properties – work is continuing to streamline the process but it is recognised that the introduction of type 3 asbestos surveys is having an impact on the time taken to ensure properties are ready to let.

Page 16/17 – Average Time to Complete Non-Urgent Repairs – it was noted that this information was in relation to contractors.

Page 19 – Gas Servicing – it was reported that when an area is concentrated on this is reflected in the statistics.

**7.3 Area Board members noted the contents of the report.**

**8. Customer Satisfaction Booklet**

8.1 The Performance & Information Manager presented the Summary of Customer Satisfaction Information report.

8.2 Members were informed that SLH are currently undertaking the Status Survey, which analyses tenants satisfaction over the overall service. An external company has been engaged to carry out the survey sending out a questionnaire to approximately 4,000 tenants.

It is hoped that we will achieve a 40% reply rate.

8.3 Page 3 – Complaints - it was noted that these appeared to be centred around the garden service and the time taken to complete repairs.

The garden service tends to be seasonal so it was anticipated the figure will come down, the repairs were due to the suspension of works in June and July.

Page 4 – Satisfaction with Complaints Handling – it was reported that in quarter 1 there had been a dip in performance. To improve the response rate, surveys are now being sent out monthly.

HK

Page 9 – Decency Satisfaction – it was noted there was a dip in performance however it was just above target.

Page 15 – Empty Homes Satisfaction (East & West Area) – the satisfaction levels have dipped in the east due to outstanding repairs.

Page 19 - Anti Social Behaviour – it was noted the dip in quarter 1 is due to the lack of returned forms, a more proactive approach from Managers was being considered to ensure completion and return of the forms.

## **9. Analysis of Evictions**

9.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report that updated the Area Boards on the findings from an analysis carried out between 1 April and 30 September 2008.

9.2 There had been 45 evictions for the year, 40 for rent arrears and 5 for other reasons. She highlighted that SLHD was evicting a high percentage in the first 2 years of tenancy. Measures are being considered to ensure new tenants receive appropriate support to maintain their tenancies.

Referring to table 2 in the report she drew members attention to evictions by location, hot spot areas identified were Rossington and Town Centre in the East and Mexborough in the West.

The Neighbourhood Housing Manager (West) added that there was deprivation in these areas. Many flats are occupied by single persons, some of whom appear not to wish to engage with housing benefits.

9.3 A member queried what happens after a tenant has been evicted. It was explained that if the household appear to have priority under the Homeless legislation the Council is notified in advance of the eviction. In some cases the evicted persons are allowed to make a further application onto the Housing Register. All the circumstances would be reviewed prior to any offer of accommodation.

9.4 It was confirmed if a tenant of a private rented property was sub-letting and claiming housing benefit this was classed as fraud and should be report to DMBC.

9.5 **Area Board Members noted the contents of the report.**

## **10. Monitor Allocations to DMBC Properties**

- 10.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report that provided Area Board members with an update on allocations made by SLH between 1 August 2008 and 30 September 2008.
- 10.2 Members attention was drawn to point 5 of the report that detailed of the 142 properties allocated in the West 59.2% were allocated to OAP stock and 40.8% to non OAP stock. She commented this puts into perspective the housing needs in general in that over half is going to OAP stock which is out of kilter with the Boroughs housing needs.
- 10.4 Accessible Housing Register (AHR), 'direct match' was explained whereby Frances Gisbourne the Senior Occupational Therapist matches the needs of disabled applicants to vacant properties which have facilities for a disabled person.
- 10.5 **Area Board members noted the contents of the report.**

## **11. Estate Improvement Fund**

- 11.1 The Neighbourhood Housing Manager (West) presented this agenda item. He tabled a document at the meeting that detailed 15 projects that had been agreed, the total costs was £33,794 excluding 2 un-costed projects.

**The Director of Customer Services asked the sub-group to check the seating under Toll Bar bridge did not incur any further additional costs.**

**DW/LR/  
IG/BC**

- 11.2 She also asked the group when in receipt of late entries to go back and revisit all of the Estate Improvement Forms to maintain fairness.

## **12. Any Other Business**

- 12.1 One member raised the proposed changes to contracts for residents lettings recently released in the media and asked if the Main Board and Area Boards would be included in any consultation.

The Director of Customer Services said Margaret Beckett had brought out some proposals, as social housing is in such short supply and whether there should be a radical review of how we allocate housing and also tenants staying in social housing.

She advised a consultation paper would be coming out early next year, at which point the Board and Area Board will be given the opportunity to put forward their views.

- 12.2 Members were asked to take a copy of the Governance Review

presentation and questionnaire given at the Board Forum produced by Debbie Ounstead.

Questionnaires to be completed and returned to L Milan asap, new members were also encouraged to complete the questionnaire.

**All  
Members**

- 12.3 Members were reminded of the Equality and Diversity training scheduled to take place on Tuesday 18 November 2008, 6pm-8pm.

Both LRalph and Cllr M Green gave their apologies in advance.

**MN**

- 12.4 Finally members were asked to complete a new 'Register of Interests' form which was available after the meeting together with a copy of their last submission for guidance.

**All  
Members**

**13. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

- 13.1 Monday 12 January 2009

The meeting ended at 17:03